

UNCLASSIFIED

Iraq

Status Report

February 18, 2009



Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State

UNCLASSIFIED



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HIGHLIGHTS



- **Final Provincial Election Results Expected This Week (*POLITICAL*, page 4).**
- **International Oil Firms Meet with Iraqi Government Officials on Terms of Oil Contracts for First Tender Round (*ECONOMIC*, page 11).**
- **German Foreign Minister Led a German Delegation to Baghdad February 17 (*DIPLOMATIC*, page 22).**
- **Bombing Kills Dozens of Shi'a Pilgrims (*SECURITY*, page 23).**

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation



Coalition building dominates Iraq's political sphere

Final Provincial Election Results Expected This Week:

- Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) announced in a February 15 press conference that the final results of Iraq's provincial elections would be released February 19, pending the completion of fraud investigations. IHEC also announced that only "minor" cases of fraud were committed during the election period, resulting in the invalidation of ballots at 30, of over 6500, polling stations nationwide. The commission further determined that the cases of fraud could not have affected elections results and thus were not serious enough to force a new vote in any province.

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation



Coalition building dominates Iraq's political sphere

Political Parties Maneuvering for Alliances Ahead of Final Results:

- Because no single party won the majority of votes in any of the 14 provinces that held elections on January 31, political leaders have already begun wrangling to form coalitions on provincial councils. Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law Party, which won pluralities in all but one of the southern provinces, has signaled a willingness to ally with Muqtada al-Sadr's lists. Some Iraqi politicians have noted the importance of forming coalitions so that urgently needed work may begin as soon as possible. Sadr withdrew from the United Iraqi Alliance, which is currently the largest Shi'a coalition in Parliament, in 2007. PM Maliki's Da'wa party is a member of the alliance, along with the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (ISCI).



POLITICAL – Government of Iraq

Coalition Affiliation (at time of appointment)
United Iraq Alliance
Kurdistani Alliance
Iraqi Accord Front
Iraqi National List
Other / Independent

(F) = Female

***Formerly Iraqiya

Prime Minister
Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

Deputy Prime Minister
Rafi Hiad Jiad al-Issawi

Deputy Prime Minister
Dr. Barham Ahmed Salih

President
Jalal Talabani
Deputy President
Tariq al-Hashimi
Deputy President
Adil Abd al-Mahdi

Minister of Agriculture
Ali Husayn Kadhum al-Bahadili

Minister of Communications
Faruq Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Rahman

Minister of Culture
Mahir Dilli Ibrahim al-Hadithi

Minister of Defense
Abd al-Qadir Muhammad Jasim al-Aubaidi

Minister of Displacement & Migration
Dr. Abd al-Samad Rahman Sultan

Minister of Electricity
Dr. Karim Wahid al-Hasan

Minister of Education
Dr. Khudayr Mousa Jaffar al-Khuzai

Minister of Environment
Dr. Nermin Othman Hassan (F)

Minister of Finance
Bayan Jabr

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hoshiyar Mahmud Zebari

Minister of Health
Dr. Salih Mahdi Mutlab al-Hasnawi

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abid Dhiyab al-Ujayli

Minister of Human Rights
Eng. Wijdan Mikhail Salim (F)

Minister of Industry & Minerals
Fawzi Fransu Hariri

Minister of Interior
Jawad Kadhum Eidan al-Bulani

Minister of Justice
*** Safa al-Din Muhammad al-Safi (Acting)

Minister of Housing & Construction
Bayan Dizayee (F)

Minister of Labor & Social Affairs
Eng. Mahmud Muhammad Jawad al-Radi

Minister of Oil
Dr. Husayn Ibrahim al-Shahristani

Minister of Planning
Ali Ghalib Baban

Minister of Trade
Dr. Abd al-Falah Hassan Hummadi al-Sudani

Minister of Science & Technology
Dr. Raid Jahid Fahmi

Minister of Municipalities & Public Works
Riyadh Abd al-Hamza Gharib

Minister of Transportation
Amir Abd al-Jabar Ismail

Minister of Water Resources
Dr. Abd al-Latif Jamal Rashid

Minister of Youth & Sports
Eng. Jasim Muhammad Jaffar

Minister of State for Civil Society Affairs
Dr. Thamer Jafar al-Zubaidi

Minister of State for National Dialogue
Dr. Akram Mousa Hadi al-Hakim

Minister of State for National Security
Eng. Shirwan Kamil al-Waili

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Dr. Muhammad Munajid Aifan al-Dulaymi

Minister of State for Provinces Affairs
Dr. Khulud Sami Izzara al-Majun (F)

Minister of State for Tourism and Antiquities
Dr. Qahtan Abbas Numanal-Jabbari

Minister of State for Women's Affairs
Dr. Nawal Majid Hamid (F)

Minister of State for CoR Affairs
Safa al-Din Muhammad al-Safi

Minister of State at Large
Muhammad Abbas Muhammad al-Uraybi

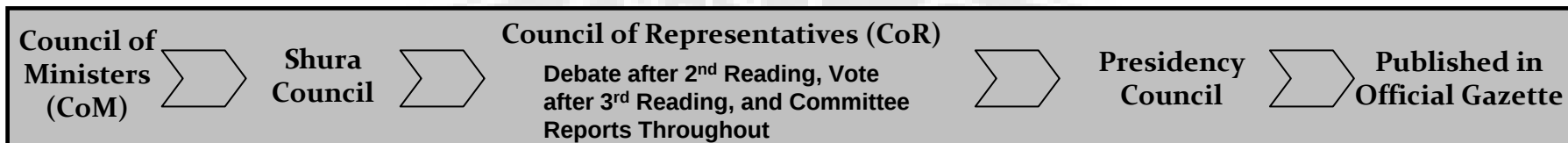
Minister of State at Large
Ali Muhammad Ahmad

Minister of State at Large
Hasan Radhi Kazim al-Sari

POLITICAL – Key Legislation



Legislative Process



- **Hydrocarbons Package:** The Framework Law was resubmitted to the Oil and Gas Committee on October 26 and then returned to the Council of Ministers. There has been no progress on the other three laws in the package.
- **Budget:** The first reading of the Amended 2009 Federal Budget bill was held on February 18. Though an initial first reading of the original budget was held on November 24, 2008, the budget was revised by the Ministry of Finance to take into account falling oil prices.

POLITICAL - Refugee Update



- **Regional governments report hosting as many as 2 million Iraqi refugees.**
- **The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that over 2.8 million Iraqis are displaced inside Iraq.**
- **In FY08, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration contributed \$287.08 million to international organizations and nongovernmental organizations to assist displaced Iraqis inside the country and in the region.**
- **The U.S. admitted 13,823 Iraqi refugees in FY08 (which ended September 30).**
- **Since the program's inception in FY07, 20,293 Iraqi refugees have been admitted for U.S. resettlement; in FY09 alone, the U.S. seeks to admit a minimum of 17,000 Iraqi refugees.**
- **In FY 2008, a total of 1,142 Special Immigrant Visa (SIVs) were issued for Afghan and Iraqi translators and interpreters (under the Section 1059 program).**
- **As of December 2008, a total of 1,311 SIVs have been issued in FY09 (under the Section 1244 program).**

ECONOMIC – Oil



Oil prices seem to have stabilized around \$40 – 45 per barrel, well below the price Iraq needs to fully fund its 2009 budget. Iraq has sufficient fiscal revenues to cover a 2009 deficit, however Iraq must make less optimistic assumptions for 2010.

Crude Oil Update:

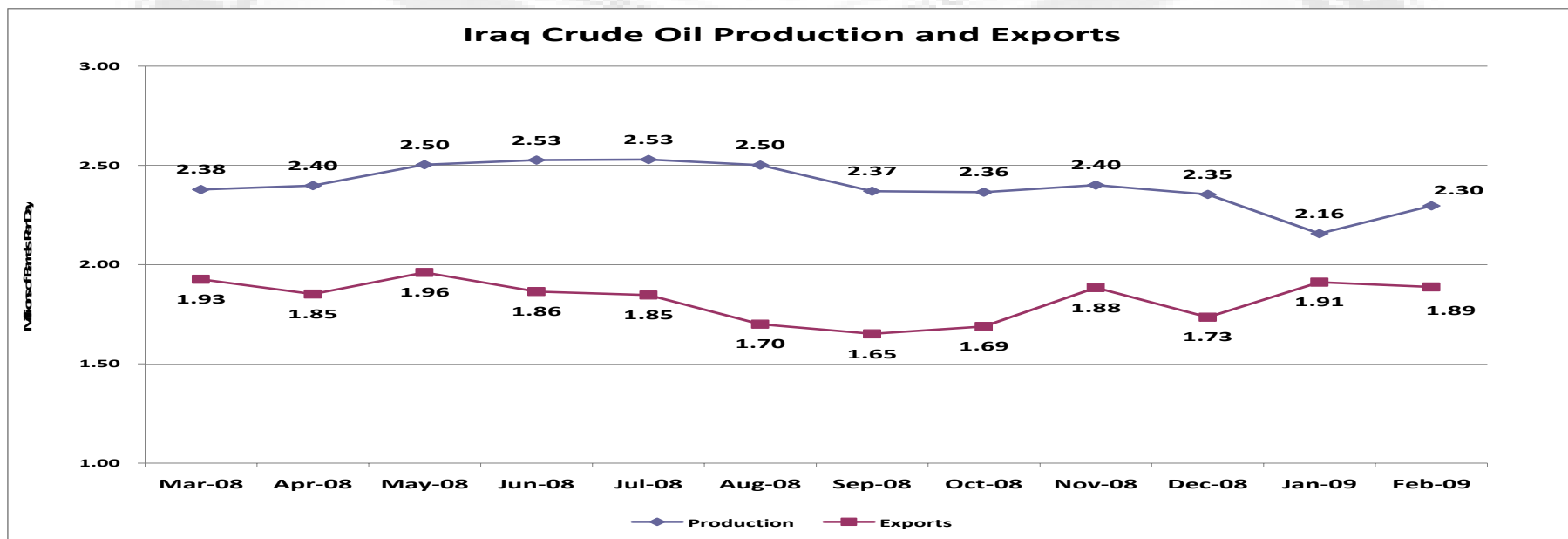
Price averages in world markets closed with the following prices:

Basrah Light at \$40.00/barrel

Dated Brent at \$44.61/barrel

WTI Cushing at \$36.91/barrel

Oman/Dubai at \$45.24/barrel



Revenue estimates:

2007: \$41.0 Billion

2008: \$61.9 Billion *

2009 (ytd): \$3.7 Billion

* Estimate adjusted as a result of newly-available Iraqi data.

ECONOMIC – Oil



As oil prices remain low, the Iraqi government is moving to boost oil output, focusing on both the current bid round and direct negotiations with oil companies.

SOMO Head Says Economic Slowdown Will Keep Down the Price of Iraqi Oil:

- The head of Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO), Falah al-Amiri, cautioned that the weakened demand for oil means it will take at least two years for oil prices to rise to \$70-75 dollars per barrel. Minister of Oil Husayn al-Shahristani said recently he felt that price range was appropriate for oil and should not be below \$70 per barrel. According to Amiri, oil surpluses resulting from slackening demand have also depressed oil prices: "The inventory should be about 52 days but at the moment it is about 57 days. This should be removed from the market, but if the international economy and growth deteriorate further, the surplus will increase." On the topic of oil contracts, Amiri said that although there is sensitivity in government and among Iraqis about foreign oil companies, their investment is necessary to develop Iraq's oil sector. "The Iraqi oil industry cannot develop without international oil contracts, whether they are technical support contracts, service contracts, or whatever. We need them (foreign companies) for their experience, money and expertise," Amiri said.

ECONOMIC – Oil



As oil prices remain low, the Iraqi government is moving to boost oil output, focusing on both the current bid round and direct negotiations with oil companies.

International Oil Firms Meet with Iraqi Government Officials on Terms of Oil Contracts for First Tender Round:

- In the face of lowered oil prices, the Government of Iraq has proposed improving the terms of the contracts to develop its oil fields, according to oil company executives attending a three-day workshop in Istanbul. In the first version of the model Iraqi contract, firms would bid on the cost per barrel of maintaining the same level of output over 20 years and the cost per barrel of raising output. Companies would recover their costs from the oil they pumped above the baseline. As some fields are old, there was concern the fields would go into decline over the course of the contract, making it difficult to recover costs. On February 12, Iraqi officials proposed amending the contracts to account for an annual decline in the baseline output targets of around 5%. Also changed was the ownership structure of the joint ventures, which would now allow firms a 75% ownership in the joint ventures with the Iraqi regional operator holding the remaining 25%. Previously, the ownership structure was 49-51%, with the Iraqi regional operator holding the majority ownership in the venture. One outstanding issue is that the contracts are currently offered as at-fee, technical service contracts.

ECONOMIC – Oil



As oil prices remain low, the Iraqi government is moving to boost oil output, focusing on both the current bid round and direct negotiations with oil companies.

Minister of Oil Speaks about OPEC Oil Cuts:

- Abdul Mahdy al-Ameedi, Deputy Director General of Iraq's petroleum contracts and licensing directorate, said oil companies must start operating in Iraq within six months of the start date of the oil contracts currently up for tender or their contract will be terminated. Ameedi also said the deals will be ratified by Iraq's Council of Ministers rather than its parliament. Should oil legislation be passed, then the power to ratify the contracts would be passed to a newly-created federal oil and gas council. Ameedi confirmed that a 5% rate of output decline would be built into the contracts and the ownership structure would be 75-25 with the international firms holding the larger ownership.

CNPC In Talks with U.S. Companies for Joint Oil Bids:

- China National Petroleum Company is in talks with U.S. energy companies to jointly bid for oil and gas contracts in Iraq, although press reports did not give the names of any of the firms.

ECONOMIC – Oil



As oil prices remain low, the Iraqi government is moving to boost oil output, focusing on both the current bid round and direct negotiations with oil companies.

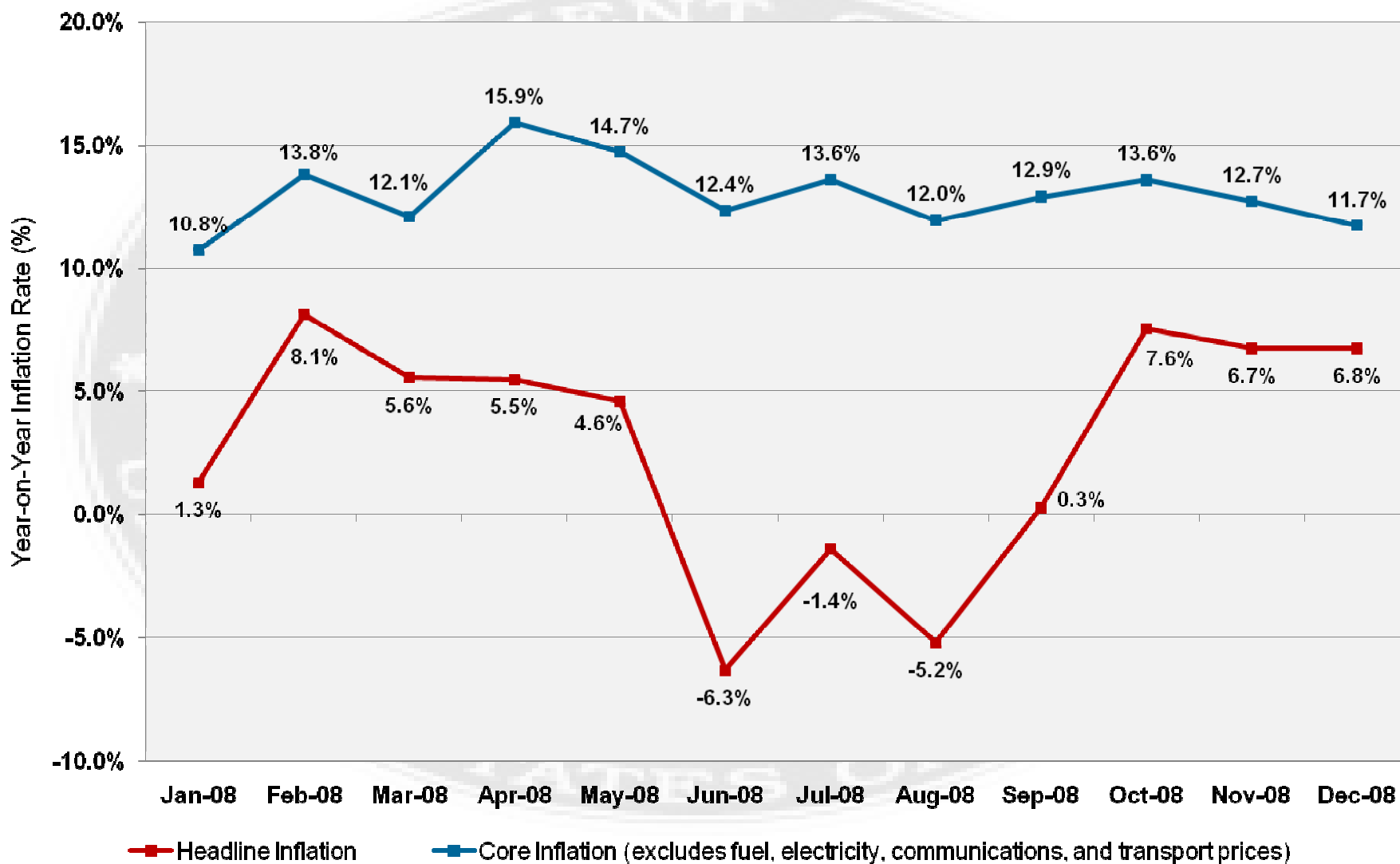
South Oil Company Issues Tenders for 40 Wells:

- **Iraq's state-owned South Oil Company has issued tenders for the drilling of 40 wells in two oilfields located in southern Iraq. International firms were invited to bid to drill ten oil wells in the Nahr Omar field and 30 in the Majnoon field. Bids are due to the South Oil Company by March 1.**

ECONOMIC – Fiscal and Monetary Affairs



Year-on-Year Inflation



ECONOMIC – Fiscal and Monetary Affairs



The Central Bank lowered interest rates once again in hopes of stimulating domestic lending. Continued monetary policy diligence is necessary to control inflation, however.

Central Bank of Iraq Cuts Interest Rates by 3%:

- The Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) announced February 16 it will reduce its annual interest rate by 3% as of March 1. In a statement released by the bank, it said the decision to lower the rate to 11% was prompted by declining inflation. .

ECONOMIC – Private Sector



Faced with smaller-than-expected budgets, private investment may help Iraq finance revenue-generating projects.

Iraq in Discussion with Emirates Firm about Private Investment Opportunities:

- **Officials from the Government of Iraq (GOI) say they are in discussion with the private firm Emirates International Investment Company (EIIC) over potential investment in Iraq's real estate sector, as well as in the industrial, oil and gas sectors. GOI representatives have visited the UAE in an effort to encourage new foreign investment in Iraq, particularly in the Al-Husainiya province of Karbala. Iraq is also seeking financial assistance to build two new airports, one north of Karbala which has land already set aside and the other, a new \$250 million airport, located between Karbala and Najaf to serve the two holy cities.**



ECONOMIC – Public Sector

Although Iraq is improving in its capacity to provide services, its enlarged public sector workforce may hinder the diversification of the jobs market.

Passenger Rail Service Reopened between Baghdad and Fallujah:

- The first passenger rail service between Baghdad and Fallujah has reopened after a five-year closure with the arrival of a train in Fallujah's renovated station February 9. Transportation officials say that the line will initially serve passenger transport only, but that a cargo service will be phased in gradually. In the coming weeks, rail authorities hope to open another section of the railroad in Anbar province, which will connect Baghdad with some of Iraq's major industrial sites.

UN Report Finds Increase in Public Sector Jobs:

- In a survey of the Iraqi workforce, the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) found that 43% of the Iraq's employed population hold government jobs. This number is nearly double the level recorded in 2005, which the report suggests is hindering the development of a diverse job market in Iraq. The percentage employed in the private sector has dropped from 25% to 17%. According to OCHA, the decrease in oil revenues means the government cannot sustain the size of its public sector and will strain the government's budget.

ECONOMIC – Public Sector



Although Iraq is improving in its capacity to provide services, its enlarged public sector workforce may hinder the diversification of the jobs market.

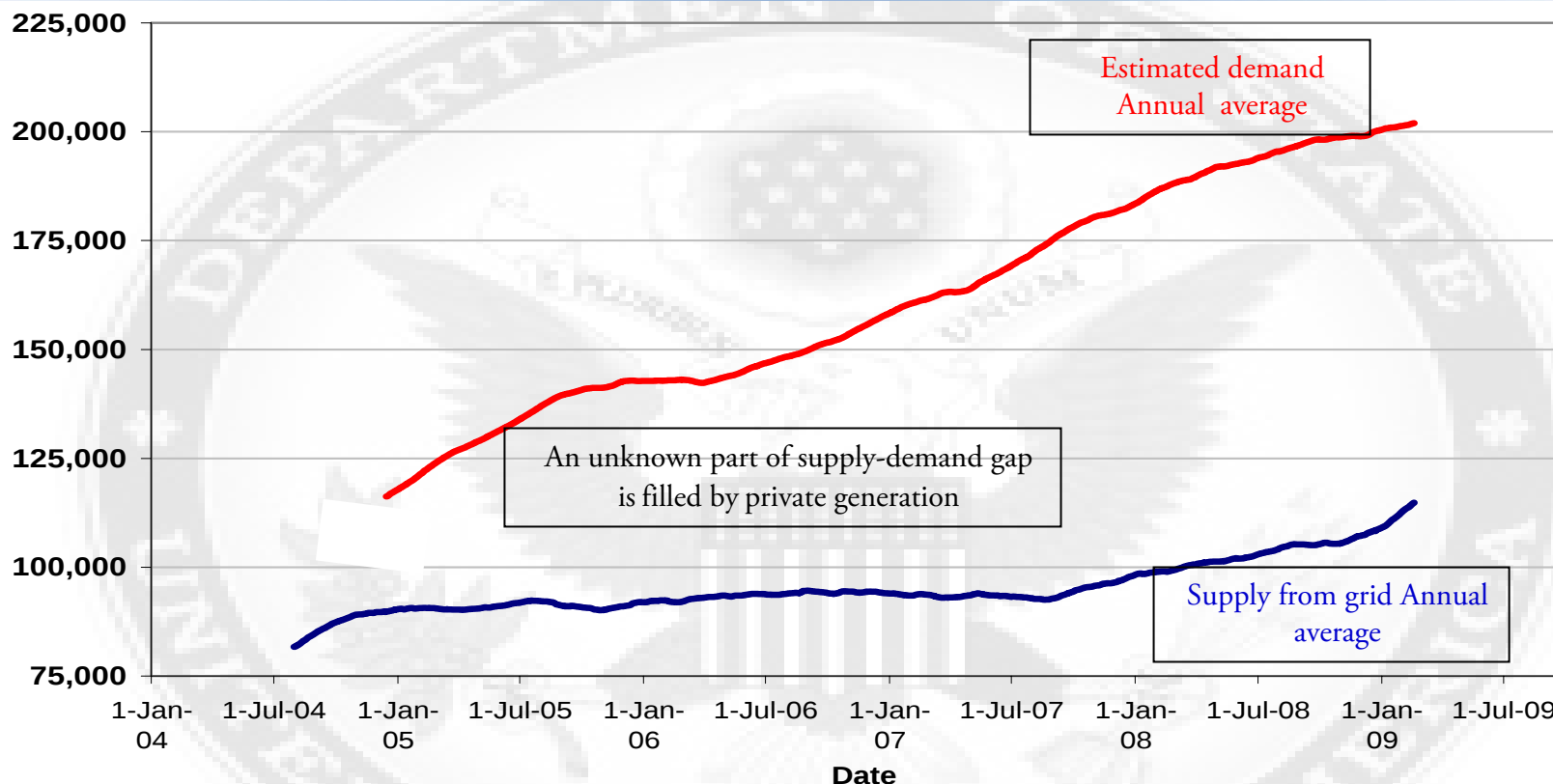
Initial Turnover of the Basrah Children's Hospital to the Ministry of Health:

- On February 9, Ambassador Crocker participated in a signing ceremony with the Iraqi Minister of Health (MOH) turning over the Basrah Children's Hospital to the Government of Iraq. The MOH has taken on the responsibility of providing site security and is actively engaged in new projects to provide electrical power, water and wastewater service to the project. A final Memorandum of Understanding between the United States, the MOH, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Project HOPE is still being finalized. While construction of the hospital is not complete, the Gulf Region Division of the Army Corps of Engineers and UNDP continue to work on remaining construction and equipment integration while Project Hope continues to address equipment donations.

Public Services – Electricity



GOI needs to strengthen policy actions to manage demand and usage patterns



- Daily electricity supply from the grid February 11-17 was 39% above the year-earlier period and met 65% of demand, compared with 45% for the year-earlier period.
- Based on estimated demand, hours of power for February 9-15 after meeting demand from essential services were Baghdad 14.6 and Iraq 14.4. Year-ago levels were Baghdad 7.3 and Iraq 9.4.

Beyond Baghdad



Diwaniyah, Orphanage for girls.

Karbala

“True success will take place when we leave Iraq to a government that is taking responsibility for its future.”

President Barak Obama

Recent Highlights

During a visit to Ahl al-Bayt University in Karbala, a delegation from Tehran's Azadi University was impressed by the advanced computers donated by the American people through the PRT. The delegation was also taken back by the University's president, who in response to the visitors' suggestion that promising students be sent to Azadi University to "complete their education" at the expense of the Government of Iran, the president replied that Ahl al-Bayt's graduates were world class and should they choose to go anywhere for further study, it would be the United States.

Anbar

In the weeks prior to Iraq's Provincial Elections over one hundred members from 14 different Anbar Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) used materials and training provided to them by Anbar PRT, USAID, DAI, IHEC and UNAMI to teach local communities about civic responsibilities and the election process. The project exceeded expectations by reaching a reported 35,207 Anbaris including 15,519 females.

Diwaniyah

In Diwaniyah, an orphanage for girls funded by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is nearing completion. This orphanage, aimed at helping both true orphans as well as disadvantaged families, will provide disadvantaged young girls a safe venue to live and study.

DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement



GOI welcomes more foreign delegations and envoys to Baghdad.

Iranian FM Leads Delegation to Iraq:

- Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki led a delegation of oil and banking officials to Iraq February 11 to discuss enhancing the bilateral relationship. The delegation, which met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, included representatives from the Iranian Central Bank, oil, trade and energy ministries.

Turkish Special Envoy Visits Iraq:

- On February 16, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari welcomed Ambassador Murad Ozelik, the Turkish Special Envoy to Iraq to Baghdad for discussions on bilateral relations. Ambassador Ozelik congratulated the Government of Iraq on the successful provincial elections. The officials also discussed future high-level visits and ways to expand technical cooperation between the two countries.

DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement



GOI welcomes more foreign delegations and envoys to Baghdad.

German FM Leads Delegation to Iraq:

- **German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier led a German delegation to Baghdad February 17. The delegation met with President Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, and Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari. Steinmeier told reporters that Germany wants to “extend a hand to the new Iraq.” Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh called the visit a “turning point in relations with Germany.” The German Foreign Ministry also announced that it hopes to establish an economic office in Baghdad, with a branch in Erbil. According to the German Economy Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, these offices “will contribute to reviving the once-intensive economic relations between Germany and Iraq.” FM Steinmeier's visit was the first by a German foreign minister since 1987.**



SECURITY - **Situation Update**

Recent attacks demonstrate that security threats persist, as ISF and Coalition Forces transition responsibilities

Bombing Kills Dozens of Shi'a Pilgrims:

- Iraqi officials reported a suicide bomber blew herself up among a crowd of Shi'a pilgrims south of Baghdad February 13, killing at least 30 and wounding dozens more. The bombing was one in a string of attacks against Shi'a pilgrims celebrating the end of the Arba'een holiday. The attack took place in the village of Abu Jasim, a popular resting place for Shi'a pilgrims traveling south to Karbala. Additionally, February 12, at least eight people were killed in a bombing in Karbala as millions of Shi'a pilgrims converged on the city to commemorate the holiday.

Iraqi Police Targeted in Mosul:

- Iraqi officials said four policemen were killed and three others were wounded when a car bomb detonated on a police patrol February 12 in Mosul. The city has experienced a number of recent attacks, most notably the February 9 suicide car bombing which killed four U.S. soldiers.

IA Soldiers Uncover Massive Explosives Cache:

- An Iraqi Army patrol southwest of Baghdad discovered an explosives cache containing four tons of homemade explosives February 13. Captain Jonathan Boyle with the 1st Armored Division, who responded to assist the Iraqi Army soldiers securing the site, said the discovery was "further evidence of the level of professionalism of Iraqi Army partners to conduct counter-cache operations and a real sign of progress."



SECURITY – Security Transition

The Government of Iraq continues to assume greater security responsibility as we normalize our enduring partnership.

Anbar SOI Transfer to GOI Responsibility:

- On February 1, Anbar province's SOI transferred from Coalition to Government of Iraq (GOI) responsibility. The GOI will lead a transfer ceremony later this month officially recognizing the event. Anbar's SOI transfer has special significance because it was in Anbar where the "Sahwa" or Awakening Movement began in the autumn of 2006 with local tribal-led security forces taking up arms against al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI). In June 2007, Coalition Forces began entering into security contracts with the Awakening volunteers, creating the SOI. The movement then grew in other parts of the country, contributing to Iraq's increasing stability. Approximately 72,000 of 94,000 SOI have now transferred to GOI control since October 2008. Salah ad-Din is the last province scheduled to transfer its SOI in April.

Coalition Forces Averaging 50 Detainee Releases Per Day:

- Beginning in February, Multi-National Force-Iraq's Task Force 134, responsible for Coalition detainee operations, is averaging around 50 detainee releases per day in accordance with the bilateral Security Agreement (SA) with the Government of Iraq. The SA states all detainees shall be released in a safe and orderly fashion or transferred to GOI custody for trial. The February detainee releases represent the first group of case files reviewed by Iraqi authorities under the SA. As of February 14, the number of detainees in Coalition custody had dropped to around 14,500.



SECURITY – Security Transition

The Government of Iraq continues to assume greater security responsibility as we normalize our enduring partnership.

GOI / USG Representatives Conduct Joint Review of FMS Program:

- **Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq’s (MNSTC-I) Security Assistance Office recently hosted representatives from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, U.S. Army Security Assistance Command, Navy International Program Office, and the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior for a financial management review of the Iraqi Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. The review provided the Iraqis with the opportunity to voice concerns and recommend changes to the program. The GOI has already received approximately \$1.5 billion in services, vehicles, aircraft parts, small arms, uniforms, and training through the FMS program and has committed an additional \$3.5 billion for FMS purchases.**

JSS Ghazaliyah Returned to Iraqi Control:

- **Coalition Force soldiers from the Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B) returned Joint Security Station (JSS) Ghazaliyah IV to Iraqi Security Forces during a ceremony in the northern section of the Ghazaliyah neighborhood February 14. Coalition commander Lt. Col. John Richardson said the transfer represented an opportunity for Coalition Forces to “step back and allow Iraqis to solve Iraqi problems.”**



SECURITY - Iraqi Security Forces

Iraq Security Forces as of Dec 31, 2008 ^a			
Component	Current Authorized Personnel ^b	Assigned Personnel ^c	Total Trained Personnel to date ^d
Ministry of Interior (MoI) Forces ^e			
Iraqi Police Service ^f	334,739	305,831	220,013
National Police	46,580	43,538	56,577
Border Enforcement ^g	45,550	40,976	38,846
Total MoI	426,869	390,345	315,436
Ministry of Defense (MoD) Forces ^h			
Army	174,805	196,127	240,058
Army Training and Support Forces ⁱ	22,345	19,990	22,930
Air Force	3,690	2,148	4,572
Navy	3,596	1,887	1,494
Total MoD	204,436	220,152	269,054
Counter Terrorism Bureau			
Special Operations ^j	6,190	4,209	4,564
Total Iraqi Security Forces	637,495	614,706	589,054

▪ Increase of 1.6K assigned and 8.5K trained since last report.

a. Numbers do not include ministry staffs.

b. Numbers reflect Government of Iraq (GOI) authorizations.

c. Numbers are based upon GOI payroll data and do not reflect present for duty totals.

d. Numbers reflect total Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) personnel trained to date, some of which are no longer assigned due to casualties, AWOL, and normal separation.

e. MoI strength excludes other services within Ministry Of Interior (MOI), including the MOI HQ, MOI Forensics, Facility Protection Services, and contracted guards.

f. The Iraqi Police Service consists of all provincial police forces (station, patrol, traffic, and special units) assigned to all 18 Iraqi provinces.

g. Data associated with Ports of Entry Directorate has been pulled out of the Directorate of Border Enforcement. Expect authorized and assigned strengths to fluctuate as the new PoED organization takes shape.

h. The Ministry Of Defense (MOD) authorized numbers are derived from Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment (MTOEs).

i. The MoD Army Training and Support Forces include logistics units and training center cadre.

j. Does not include personnel assigned to Counterterrorism Bureau (CTB) or Counterterrorism Command (CTC) headquarters.



CONTACT INFORMATION

This brief draws from multiple sources. References are cited on the following pages.

For additional information, please see:

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- Department of Defense, Section 9010 Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq
http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_Congress_Dec_08.pdf

Please forward all questions and/or comments to:

NEA-I-IPOG-DL@state.gov



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- Source for President Obama's Quote: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16791>

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- MNFI Press Release, February 14, http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&cid=25394&Itemid=21
- MNFI Press Release- February 16, http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&cid=25415&Itemid=128

Slide 26:

- DoD Input to Iraq Status Report February 18, 2009